

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Agenda
Meeting Date:	26th January 2017
Author/Contact:	Sophie Morling
Venue: Room G05 + G06, BrightSpace, 160 Hadleigh Road, Ipswich, IP2 0HH	

			Paper Number
1.	14.00	Welcome, apologies and housekeeping	
2.		Minutes of previous meeting	LAF 16/19
3.		Declaration of interest	
4.	14.10	Sizewell C	LAF 17/01
5.		Network Rail Level Crossings (paper)	LAF 17/02 Appendix A
6.		Coastal Access Update (paper)	LAF 17/03
7.		Planning and Development	LAF 17/04 Appendix A
8.		Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	LAF 17/05
9.		Recruitment	LAF 17/06
10.		Any Other Business	
11.		Public Question Time	
12.	16:00	Next meeting – 20 April 2017, Venue TBC	

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Minutes of meeting held at Stutton Community Hall on 20 October 2016
Meeting Date:	26 January 2017
Author/Contact:	Sophie Morling
Venue:	TBC

1. Welcome, apologies and housekeeping

Present: Barry Hall (BH) (Chair), David Barker (Vice Chair) (DB), Margaret Hancock (MH), Jane Hatton (JH), Roland Wilson (RW)

SCC Officers Present: Sophie Morling (SM) (minutes), Steve Kerr (SK), Claire Parker (CP)

Member of the Public: Gordon Crosby (GC)

Apologies: Diana Kearsley (DK), Andrew Woodin (AW), Annette Ellis (AE), Monica Pipe (MP), Anthony Wright (AWR), John Wayman (JW), Cllr Jane Storey (JS), Gordon Merfield (GM)

SLAF wishes AW a full recovery from his accident. AE has informed BH that she has resigned.

2. Minutes of previous meeting (LAF16/16)

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2016 were reviewed and confirmed to be an accurate record.

2 changes to the previous minutes:

Item 9 – change large to any

Item 6 – add claim into the sentence

Previous minutes updated

3. Declaration of interest – None

4. Coastal Access Update

CP advised that there has been very little progress since last meeting. BH said that speaking to land owners is holding this up as well. JH asked what will be done to promote it? BH responded by saying that he and AW attended a meeting in Beccles and this was well attended by most of those involved in this project.

5. Network Rail Level Crossings Paper

Needham Market – SCC Officers and met on site with Network Rail and the land owner (with GC in attendance) and using an adjustable temporary platform, assessed the two proposed heights and considered the flooding issues. Officers considered the reduced height of 1.975m was not unreasonable for public use, and the flooding frequency tolerable.

Ultimately, if SCC promotes the rail crossing diversion order, it ought to be supporting the re-routing via the culvert. Officers await more detail regarding the culvert design and accessibility it still considered a significant issue. Still on-going negotiations with Network Rail about maintenance after flooding and who will clear the site. Despite these issues SCC have agreed to go to the next stage of design.

GC advised that the access ramps were no more risky than walking through the door. GC also said that he liked SCC's comments so far regarding this site.

Next design panel for this is 2nd November 2016.

DB added that he supports this culvert and to make sure the proper solution is put in place and the right decision is made for everyone to use.

Halesworth – Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) visited site and advised Network Rail to keep it open.

Felixstowe – Another meeting will take place next Thursday 27th October with Suffolk County Council (SCC), Network Rail and Bidwells, as Bidwells have issues with the proposed changes. SCC is agreeing with Network Rail on the changes. BH advised that SLAF will make no comment as yet and will let SK keep up the negotiations.

Countywide – SK read out the agenda from yesterday's meeting (19th October 2016) with Network Rail and went through a selection of crossings and phase 2 consultation feedback. Everything is still confidential, but in due course officers will produce a summary to SLAF.

BH advised that a meeting with the sub-group should take place soon, as there are still concerns.

Group discussion took place with regards to the level crossing issues. At Westerfield Network Rail would like to grant air rights for the future bridge. Stackpool – SCC is still objecting. MH advised that she went to the Ipswich crossing meeting and nothing was taken on board by Network Rail and what people's views and opinions are. Brantham route is taking people via a road, over a bridge and across a field. SK believed the draft order would be in place by March 2017.

RW view on legality of using TWAO process? SK believes they can use it, each individual crossing costs Network Rail between a minimum £4,000-£5,000 to close and addressing lots of crossings in one order is clearly more cost effective for NR. RW mentioned that Network Rail are not proposing any new rails and want to increase speeds and have an Act to get it through and are not using it for the correct purpose. RW mentioned that Ramblers HQ are considering a legal challenge

ACTION: SK to do a summary of SCC's position for each crossing proposal
BH to sort out a date for a sub-group meeting

6. Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Boundary Review

BH advised that at the Suffolk County Cabinet meeting David Wood spoke about the Suffolk Coastal Heath boundary review with formal consultations taking place during the winter of 2017 around the extension of the boundaries to include more south of the Stour, as well as the north of the Stour. Please find a short paper attached below – this will be spoken about in more detail at the next meeting.



LAF1620 Suffolk
Coast & Heaths Bou

7. Access Development Projects

a) **Update on ROWIP** – Consultation complete and continuing to pull all the results together. CP has undertaken a series of stakeholder meetings with key internal partners and stakeholders including Planning, Economic Development, Transport Strategy and Public Health. Consultation so far had informed the development of the following six key themes:

- 1) Increasing community and volunteer engagement
- 2) Enhancing health and wellbeing
- 3) Planning for sustainable communities
- 4) Supporting growth and economic prosperity
- 5) Protecting, maintaining and enhancing the Infrastructure including the Definitive Map
- 6) Inclusive promotion and marketing

CP updated the group on the emerging actions within these themes and that work continues to be undertaken with partners and stakeholders to embed Rights of Way into wider agendas. Timescales have slipped and publication of the ROWIP 2 is now likely to be in March 2017.

b) **Walkers are Welcome** – CP updated the group on the progress to date across Suffolk on the Walkers are Welcome accreditation, beginning with a brief overview of the scheme. See [here](#) for further details.

Currently the communities of Shotley, Woodbridge and Hadleigh have submitted initial applications and are working on the full accreditation. Interest in the scheme has also been shown by Sudbury, Snape and Clare. The RoW Access and Development team continue to support all communities involved with a view to sharing learning, developing local and national networks and putting Suffolk on the map as a walking destination.

8. Any Other Business

Looking at the next meeting in January to discuss about recruiting some more members and to see who we are looking for to join the forum going forward.

Public Question Time – No questions from the public.

Dates and Venues of Future Meetings – January 26th 2017
April 20th 2017
July 20th 2017
October 19th 2017

Please note: these are provisional dates and venues to be confirmed

END

Suffolk Local Access Forum
Title: Sizewell Stage 2 Response
Meeting: 26th January 2017
Author/Contact: Barry Hall
Venue: Room G05 + G06, BrightSpace, 160 Hadleigh Road, Ipswich, IP2 0HH

Response of Suffolk Local Access Forum to EDF Sizewell C Stage 2 Consultation

Following the presentation by Fiona Henderson, Tom McGarry and Ian Bryant to members of SLAF we wish to make the following response to the consultation particularly as it relates to access of walkers, horseriders and cyclists to existing and proposed routes during the construction phase and beyond.

As a statutory consultee and advisor to Suffolk County Council on access issues, we would expect that the impact of the construction of Sizewell C on the existing rights of way and permissive path network in the area will be carefully assessed with any changes kept to a minimum and alternative routes being kept as short as possible and constructed and maintained to specifications agreed with the Highway Authority.

Specific Comments on the Stage 2 consultation

SLAF notes that the construction phase will particularly impact on the Suffolk Coast Path shortly to become part of the National Coast Path, the Sandlings Walk which uses a permissive route through Gorse Hill, Bridleway 19 which will be closed and other public rights of way within the Leiston/Sizewell area. Consequently we would seek reassurances that:

- ⤴ Any changes to the current network should be kept to a minimum.
- ⤴ Closure of the Suffolk Coast Path for development of sea defences, landing jetty and beach landing facility should be kept to a minimum so as not to impact on the use of the area by locals and visitors.
- ⤴ Any construction phase development should where possible have minimum physical and visual impact on access.
- ⤴ After construction, all closed routes including permissive ones should be re-instated to the satisfaction of the Highway Authority and where possible new routes which have been created should be retained and dedicated for public use.
- ⤴ Land used for campus and construction purposes should when established as heathland be dedicated as Open Access land under the CROW 2000 Act.
- ⤴ Regarding the Campus Site, Option 2 is favoured as this will enable retaining Eastbridge Road for access with the addition of the new bridleway/cycle route
- ⤴ With regard to the green rail route, where path closures are suggested with a long detour, it is felt that with the frequency and low speed of the freight trains these are not necessary provided crossings have adequate sight-lines.

- ⤴ Any highway improvements to the A12 and B1122 should have full regard for the safety of walkers, horseriders and cyclists.
- ⤴ The crossing at Lovers Lane should be a controlled one.

Publicity and Promotion

- ⤴ It is essential that any changes to public rights of way through diversions and closures whether long term or temporary are widely publicised through information boards around the affected routes, walk leaflets widely available at TIC's, hotels, b&b's, stations and libraries, and on relevant websites.
- ⤴ The construction site is likely to attract significant visitor interest and suitable arrangements such as viewing platforms should be put in place to cater for and manage this.

Legacy

- ⤴ Any new routes put in place as a consequence of the construction phase which would be to the benefit of the wider rights of way network should be dedicated for use by the public and shown on the Definitive Map.
- ⤴ Routes closed during the construction phase should be re-instated to the satisfaction of the Highway Authority.
- ⤴ Permissive routes on the EDF estate should where possible be dedicated as public rights of way.
- ⤴ New areas of habitat creation resulting from the reinstatement of land used for the campus and construction works should be when established should be open to the public and dedicated for Open Access under the CROW Act.
- ⤴ The SLAF would expect EDF to engage in discussion with the Highway Authority how post-construction changes to the rights of way in the immediate area of Sizewell could better link in with proposals for the wider area included in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

The offer for a site visit to see the SSSI mitigation habitat being created at Aldehurst Farm and possibly the 3D model at the Leiston office is something SLAF could build into their April meeting. However SLAF reserves the right to seek further presentations and offer further comments when Stage 3 consultation is announced.

Your Ref:
Our Ref:
Date: 22 December 2016
Enquiries to: Steve Kerr
Tel: 01473 264745
Email: Steve.Kerr@suffolk.gov.uk

Richard Schofield
Route Managing Director (Anglia)
Network Rail
One Stratford Place
Montchichet Road
London
E20 1EJ

Dear Mr Schofield,

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL RESPONSE TO PHASE I OF NETWORK RAIL'S LEVEL CROSSING REDUCTION STRATEGY

Further to Suffolk County Council's (SCC) reply dated 2 August 2016 to the Stage 1 Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) consultation and the meeting held between Network Rail (NR) and SCC on 19/10/16, I hereby set out SCC's formal response to the Stage 2 consultation proposals. Please note in most instances the county council's position is subject to surveying each proposed new route.

SO1 - Sea Wall, FP13 Brantham

The Area Rights of Way Manager has recently inspected the proposed diversionary route as shown on the consultation plan and advises it is wholly unsuitable for public use. SCC welcomes the retention of part of FP13 as a cul-de-sac south of the current crossing point, as it will allow users to continue to enjoy that section of sea wall for the purposes of recreation and bird watching. SCC objects to the proposal pending clarification as to the precise alignment of the diversionary route.

SO2 – Brantham High Bridge, FP6 Brantham

The council has previously requested an off-road link be provided that would minimise the amount of road walking to connect with FP34 Tattingstone and is disappointed to see that no such off-road link is to be provided, which also has the support of Brantham Parish Council. Accordingly, the council objects to this proposal. SCC also notes the crossing is currently subject to a safety based temporary closure.

SO3 – Buxton Wood, FP22 Bentley

Although SCC has no objection the provision of the new footpath alongside Buxton Wood, it is understood the landowner is objecting to this alignment. SCC does not object to this proposal, but reserves the right to object to any modification to the proposal.

SO4 – Island, FP18 Bentley

NR have advised that the footpath link proposed alongside Capel St Mary road has been objected to by the landowner and will no longer be progressed. A revised consultation plan has recently been circulated for further comment.

This proposal will force users to walk along the highway verge, which receives only one vegetation cut per year. SCC is also introducing Vehicle Restraint Systems (VRS) on the approaches to the bridge and as a result, requests NR undertake a further RSA. SCC also considers the length of diversion to be unreasonably long. SCC awaits receipt of the RSA but at this stage objects to the proposal.

SO5 – Pannington Hall, FP34 Wherstead

NR have advised that the RSA identified some issues with the vehicular approaches to the bridge, recommending the need for a pedestrian refuge and other mitigating works eg vegetation cut back, road widening and lining.

The council notes the proposed additional footpath links but requests that the link to the west of The Street be recorded as a bridleway, to be 3 metres wide. This would allow connection to recorded Bridleway Nos 29/30 Wherstead. However, SCC does not intend to object.

SO7 – Broomfield, FP12 Barham

NR has advised that the Environment Agency (EA) has already confirmed they won't agree to any changes in levels but are meeting them to discuss other potential flooding mitigation measures. NR propose to surface the new footpath link and connecting paths with a stone surface, in order to mitigate against potential flooding. Please note SCC will need to agree, in advance, the type and extent of any surfacing.

A VRS also currently exists at the junction with Pesthouse Lane and FP11 Barham. The council would like to be informed of the meeting outcome with the EA but does not, at this stage, intend to object.

SO8 -Stacpool, FP33 Barking

SCC has previously objected to this proposal due to the inconvenience users would face in walking alongside the fast and heavily trafficked B1113 road and notes no link has been provided parallel to and south of the railway corridor, despite SCC requesting this. It is noted that as part of the restoration plan for the quarry, the area is to become a nature reserve in 2020. This is likely to make the path within the quarry more attractive to users. SCC also notes that pedestrians can make use of the footway facility along the B1113. Accordingly, it does not object.

S11 – Leggetts, FP6 Old Newton & Dagworth,

SCC notes this option has not changed since the first consultation event and does not object to the proposal.

S12 – Gooderhams, FP19 Bacton, S13 – Fords Green, FP14 Bacton, S69 Bacton – FP13 Bacton

Further to SCC's previous comments and the suggested package of alternatives that were tabled on 31/8/16, it is disappointing to note that for the Gooderhams crossing no footpath link is being proposed west of, and parallel to, the railway corridor that would link FP 19 Bacton to the Wassicks Lane crossing. Although the county council's comments have been taken on board with regard to the Fords Green crossing, the RSA for the Bacton crossing (S69 - FP13) has identified a public safety issue with using the B1113 road and has recommended a footway be constructed alongside the carriageway. The county council now awaits confirmation that this is to be progressed. The council also repeats its request for a position statement from NR on how it is to address the public safety and flooding issues that affect the Pound Hill underpass, and would take this opportunity to

submit to Network Rail that it should make inquiries to the local planning authority whether any development is proposed in the area which requires a safe pedestrian route along the Pound Hill underpass

SCC therefore objects to the current proposals for all three crossings.

S16 – Gislingham, BR10 Finningham

The council has no further comments to make on the proposal and does not intend to object.

S17 – Paynes, FP26 Gislingham

The council has previously offered no objection to the proposal but the landowner recently proposed two alternative routes. NR has recently circulated a further plan showing the preferred alignment. SCC does not intend to object to the revised proposal.

S18 – Cow Pasture Lane, Byway 11 Mellis

The council offers no objection to the proposed downgrade to bridleway status.

S19 – Rectory Road, Mellis

SCC welcomes NR's decision to retain bridleway status as part of the vehicular downgrade and does not object to this latest proposal.

S20 – Beecroft, Mellis

Private crossing.

Beecrofts is off the public highway network. However, if it is closed and there is consequential displaced agricultural traffic using Earlsford Road, compounded by the closed Rectory Road, SCC would be concerned about the adverse impacts of this. There is an existing footway for about 200 metres from the junction with Rectory Road northwards. Thereafter Earlsford Road is narrow and winding, and suffers from a lack of drainage and no street lighting for a distance of about 550 metres. It is a route that would be used to access the village primary school. There is a lack of commodious refuge in the verge for pedestrians, which is often muddy and uneven due to overrunning by passing vehicles and occasional high ground. Increased use by large agricultural vehicles is likely to exacerbate these characteristics. SCC requests NR undertake a further RSA but at this stage objects.

S21 – Abbots, Mellis

Private pedestrian crossing.

S22 – Weatherby, Newmarket

No public rights exist on this crossing. SCC now understands NR may be reviewing the future of this crossing, based on the very high levels of usage and the strong local opposition to its closure. SCC notes the crossing provides a direct and convenient link between the residential areas south of the railway and the community and retail services located to the north. SCC urges NR to keep this crossing open.

S23 – Higham, FP1 Higham

SCC notes the initial RSA did not identify any public safety issues along the proposed alternative, Higham Road. This recommendation is not at all clear, in view of the Stage 2 RSA recommendation for S24 below, which highlights Higham Road as a fast and heavily trafficked access road connecting to the A14 trunk road. However, subject to the RSA recommendations being implemented the council does not object.

S24 – Higham Ground Frame, FP6 Barrow

Further to SCC's suggested revisions tabled at the end of August, we note the revised proposals include the creation of new public rights of way on both sides of the railway corridor. Accordingly, the council does not object.

S25 – Cattishall, Great Barton

At the meeting in October, NR advised a legal agreement was in the process of being drafted between NR and the developers, Berkeleys, for the delivery of a stepped footbridge. In the interim, the council objects to the current proposal, until such a time as the legal agreement has been signed and a copy served on the council

S27 - Barrels, FP5 Thurston, S28 – Grove Farm, FP 11 Thurston

SCC submitted a package of suggestions to mitigate against the closure of both these crossings at the end of August and is disappointed to see that these have not been taken forward in respect of the FP 5 Thurston crossing (S27 Barrels). Accordingly, the council objects to the proposals for both these crossings on the basis that pedestrians will be forced to use Barrels Road, which has no footway, in a village where a significant amount of residential development is planned and pedestrian and vehicular traffic will therefore increase. SCC would be prepared to withdraw its objection if a footpath link were created parallel to, and north of the railway, linking Barrels Road to the Barrels crossing.

S29 – Hawk End Lane, FP12 Elmswell

As previously stated, the council supports the footpath link north of the railway corridor to link to Parnell Lane.

S30 – Lords No29, FP9 Elmswell

The council welcomes the proposed footpath links running parallel to the railway corridor and does not object to the proposal.

S31 – Mutton Hall, FP35 Wetherden

SCC is disappointed to see that the suggested westwards link to Captain's Lane has not been progressed and has concerns about the safety risk posed to pedestrians in diverting users east over the road bridge. SCC has recently responded to NR's suggested road safety mitigation measures under separate cover. SCC objects to the proposal.

S32 – Haughley Green, FP1 Haughley

SCC considers the length of diversion to be unreasonably long and additionally, has concerns regarding NR's proposed road safety mitigation measures. SCC has responded to these under separate cover. SCC therefore objects to the proposal.

S33 – Westerfield, FP18 Ipswich

NR now propose to grant air rights for the future delivery of the bridge that is being negotiated between the local planning authority (LPA) and the developers. Until such a time as a legal agreement is drawn up between NR, the LPA and SCC setting out the terms of this commitment, the council objects to the current proposal to redirect users to the Westerfield Station road level crossing.

C18 – Munceys, FP 19 Fordham (Cambridgeshire)

As part of the proposal, a new footpath link is proposed in the county of Suffolk, connecting to Footpaths 1/2 Newmarket. SCC objects on the grounds of road safety as users will be forced to walk within the carriageway of Landwade Road and across the bridge, where no footway refuge currently exists.

Other Matters

- It is disappointing to note that the summary sheets presenting the preferred options at the second round of consultation only identified the numbers of submitted questionnaires and did not take account of other feedback received via other communication means such as, for instance, letter or email.

- Where Public Rights of Way are successfully diverted to alternative existing level crossings, and these are then included in NR's future level crossing reduction phases, the county council expects grade separation will be the only option to preserve the integrity of the highways network.
- SCC will require NR to agree a works package for each level crossing proposal and strongly recommends these site inspections be undertaken jointly. Other assessments will need to be undertaken by SCC staff, for example flood risk and environmental/archaeological inspections. SCC will require reimbursement for the officer time taken to undertake this work.
- SCC is developing a framework to calculate a commuted maintenance sum resulting from the proposals, which will be populated as part of the individual crossing works package assessments. The purpose of the commuted sum is to ensure the county council does bear the ongoing costs of new assets created by these proposals.
- SCC expects new routes to be DDA compliant and to be constructed to a standard which reflects the use to which the council expects the route to be put.
- The council reserves the right to make further representations as more detailed information emerges on the options.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Kerr
Definitive Map Manager
Rights of Way and Access
Resource Management
Suffolk County Council
Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich IP1 2BX

cc Nicholas Eddy, Commercial Schemes Sponsor, Network Rail
cc Andrew Kenning, Asset Engineer (Level Crossings), Network Rail

Suffolk Local Access Forum
Title: Network Rail – Public Rights of Way Level Crossings
Meeting: 26th January 2017
Author/Contact: Steve Kerr
Venue: Room G05 + G06, BrightSpace, 160 Hadleigh Road, Ipswich, IP2 0HH

Introduction

This paper updates the Forum on the main level crossings being addressed by Network Rail (NR) and Suffolk County Council (SCC), and progress on their Transport and Works Act proposals.



Needham Market Gypsy Lane and FP6

The Forum were updated on the results of the flood modelling and SCC's response, at its meeting on 20 October 2016. A further Design Panel meeting was held on 3 November, at which NR and their consultants presented the outcomes of the flood modelling study and provided further updates on the wider scheme.

SCC was subsequently consulted on an initial design for the culvert itself and made the following comments. NR's responses are highlighted red:-

- The guardrail on the approaches is shown as approximately 1.25m above the footpath surface – this should be raised to 1.4m as the recommended height for cycleways. **Agreed – Handrails to be raised to 1.4m from footpath level.**
- Outline details should be provided for how the walkway will tie into the footpaths on the approaches. **Agreed – details to be provided on drawings.**
- SCC questions whether the concrete walkway needs any additional surfacing laid on top of it. We would suggest that a textured concrete finish would be sufficient and be more durable than any applied surfacing, which will have a further maintenance burden. **The concrete footpath to have a brush/broom finish which acts as an anti-slip surfacing, once texture has worn away the surface can be scarified to restore textured non-slip finish, or resin bound surfacing can be applied.**
- The stability of the existing wing walls adjacent to the proposed route of the footpath would need to be assessed/investigated to ensure that they can safely support the ground behind them. **Note to be added to drawing and captured in DRA.**

- SCC will need to see all the detailed design for the complete structure, including ramps, gradients, widths, radii, to a standard suitable for a cycle path. **Understood. We will do when they are available late this year / next year.**
- Furthermore, what is the extent of the structure that NR will own and maintain? **NR would be responsible for the culvert structure. SCC would be responsible for maintenance of all surfaces on the new diversion route.**
- How will vehicular access be made available for maintenance of the walkway surface? **The proposed path has a nominal width of 2.5 metres which will accommodate light maintenance vehicles, with access to the west of the railway taken from Stowmarket Road. Access for maintenance of the path to the east of the railway is expected to be as the existing arrangement for the footpaths linking to Hawks Mill and Creting St Mary.**
- Our Floods team have stated that although the cross sections indicate that the footpath within the culvert will have a 2% crossfall (which is considered adequate), the path also needs to have a significant longfall on it in order that water will drain out from beneath the culvert so as to prevent the longitudinal side drain from clogging up and the surfaces becoming slippery etc. **The drainage channel is the primary means of drainage to the culvert. The limited headroom clearance and requirement to minimise the frequency of flooding precludes the introduction of a longitudinal gradient over the footpath. Longitudinal fall can however be introduced within the drainage channel to improve drainage.**

Halesworth Station - Barrow crossing



Following a public meeting with residents and further discussions with the MP for Suffolk Coastal, Dr Thérèse Coffey during the summer of 2016, NR have now installed gates with additional safety warnings at the approaches to the crossing, warning cyclists to dismount and giving instructions to wait until a train has cleared the platform. Earlier in 2016, Network Rail carried out a nine-day census of the crossing, and recorded 206 incidents of people walking behind or in front of a train in the station. The census also found 32 cyclists crossed without dismounting their bike. The gates will encourage cyclists to dismount and pass more safely across the platform and the crossing. Network Rail will continue to monitor and carry out more censuses to assess any change in behaviour at the crossing. If the behaviour change is positive, the crossing is likely to remain open.

Felixstowe Branch Line Improvements – Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO)



Further to the Forum's last update, SCC met with NR and Trinity Estate's land agents, Bidwells, on 27 October 2016 to discuss the scheme. It quickly became apparent that Bidwells were most unhappy about the type and location for the bridge. Bidwells argued they needed vehicular access (for their agricultural operations) across the railway corridor and as such, a vehicular standard type bridge was essential.

Criticism was levelled against NR for not consulting them on their access needs, particularly since the Estate currently benefitted from private rights along Keepers Lane and across the operational railway. Bidwells were also of the view that the location for the bridge was undesirable and were of the view that they could build a vehicular standard bridge for the same budget allocated for bridleway bridge. The height of the bridge and associated 170 metre long ramps were also considered to be a blot on the landscape, despite NR proposing to screen the structure with tree belt landscaping.

It was agreed that Bidwells would work up the bridge proposal, ensuring compliance with NR's design and operational standards, and submit this to NR for further consideration.

On 3 November NR held a public exhibition on the TWAO proposals at Trimley Sports and Social Club, which appears to have been well attended. SCC met NR again on 19 January 2017 and the outcome of this meeting will be reported to the Forum verbally.

General/Countywide

NR's Suffolk Level Crossing Reduction Strategy - Transport and Works Act Order

SCC consulted the Cabinet Member for Roads and Transport before submitting its Stage 2 consultation response (Appendix A).

Officers have advised NR a package of works will be needed for each crossing proposal but will not be undertaking any site visits to assess these, until such a time as all the proposals have been confirmed. The county council is also currently working on a commuted sums framework. As part of this, some regional benchmarking will be required. NR are currently undertaking a land referencing exercise through their existing agents, Ardent. SCC were advised in late December that going forward, landowner engagement will now be undertaken by Property Consultants, Bruton Knowles.

END – SK & AW/SCC January 2017

Suffolk Local Access Forum
Title: The England Coast Path
Meeting: 26th January 2017
Author/Contact: Andrew Woodin
Venue: Room G05 + G06, BrightSpace, 160 Hadleigh Road, Ipswich, IP2 0HH

1. Progress on Establishing The England Coast Path (ECP)

Officers from Natural England met Andrew Woodin and Annette Robinson on 10/1/17 and updated them on new stretches which will be worked on in Suffolk this year, and the NE lead officers. the complete picture looks like this:

Stretch	NE Coastal Access Officer and Support
Hopton to Aldeburgh	Fiona Taylor and David Waldram
Aldeburgh to Bawdsey	Jonathan Clarke and David Waldram
Bawdsey to Felixstowe Ferry	Kim Thurlby and (vacant)
Felixstowe Ferry to Shotley Gate	Laura Chellis and Tracy O'Shea
Shotley Gate to Harwich	Kim Thurlby and Alice Silk

A new collaborative agreement will be drafted by which NE will refund Suffolk County Council for the professional services of it's staff. In 2016 the reimbursement level was set at £6,500. NE officers also noted further training will be offered to coastal access authorities on the management of national trails and coastal access and this was welcomed by SCC officers.

NE officers noted that on the important matter of funding access authorities on the maintenance of England's National Trails, Natural England will be reducing it from the current level of 75%. (The contribution is based on a formula which takes account of the particular characteristics of a specific trail and is paid as an annual grant.) The level of reduction has not yet been determined and NE is working with a National Trail working group, which includes some National Trail access authorities.

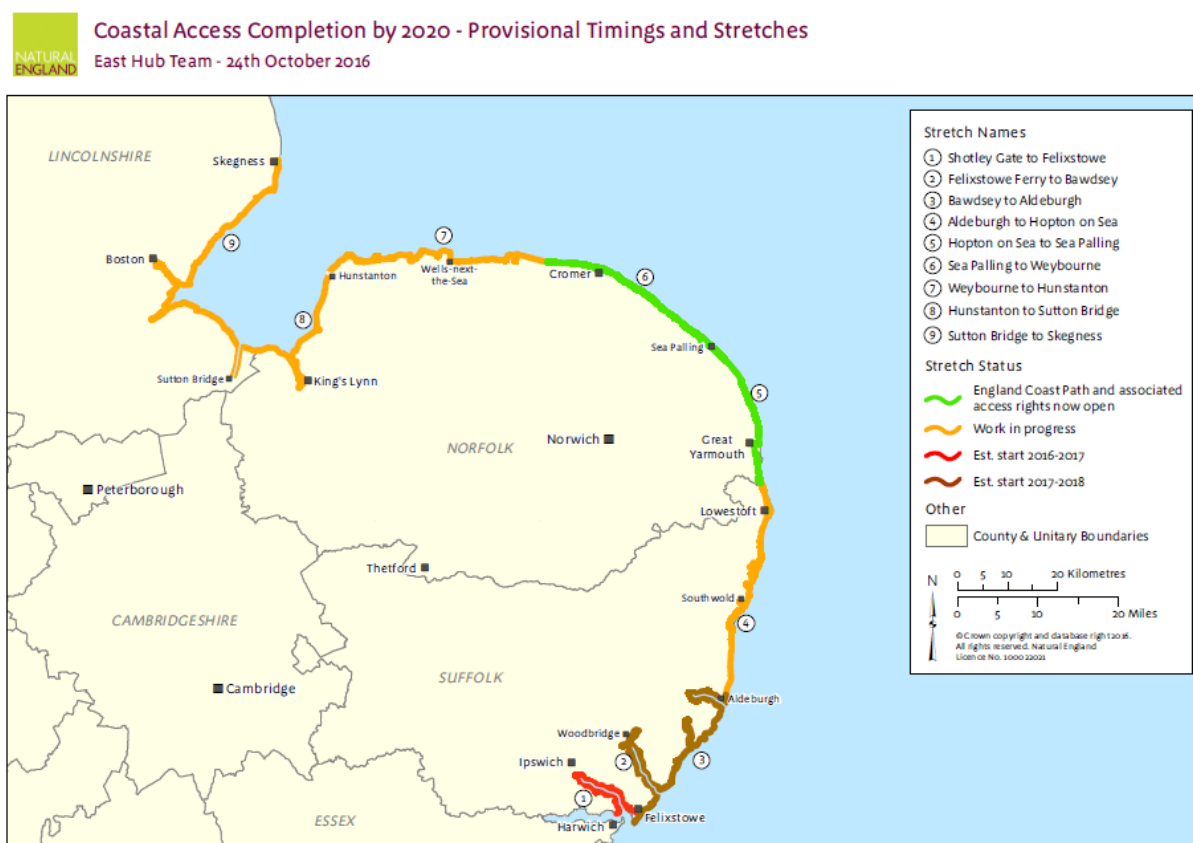
The latest newsletter from Natural England (Nov 2016) states:

Location	Stretch	Current Activity*	Further Detail	Next Milestone
Essex Harwich - Shotley Gate	39	Stage 2 & 3: Develop and Propose	Site visits and meetings with landowners to discuss alignment options.	Finalise and publish our proposals in summer 2017.
Suffolk Aldeburgh to Hopton	43	Stages 2 & 3: Develop and Propose	Site visits and meetings with stakeholders and landowners to discuss alignment options.	Finalise and publish our proposals September 2017 tbc.

2. Promoting the England Coast Path

Discussions continue with Norfolk and Essex County Councils on the potential for joint promotion and management of the ECP once it is fully established in East Anglia, including a meeting on 19/12/16. At the meeting it was agreed that the stage had been reached where political agreement should be sought to continue partnership discussion. So far the title of East Anglia Coast Path has been a working one, and it was felt the title of East of England Coast path might be more appropriate to avoid the confusion of which counties historically constitute East Anglia. Member views are welcome...

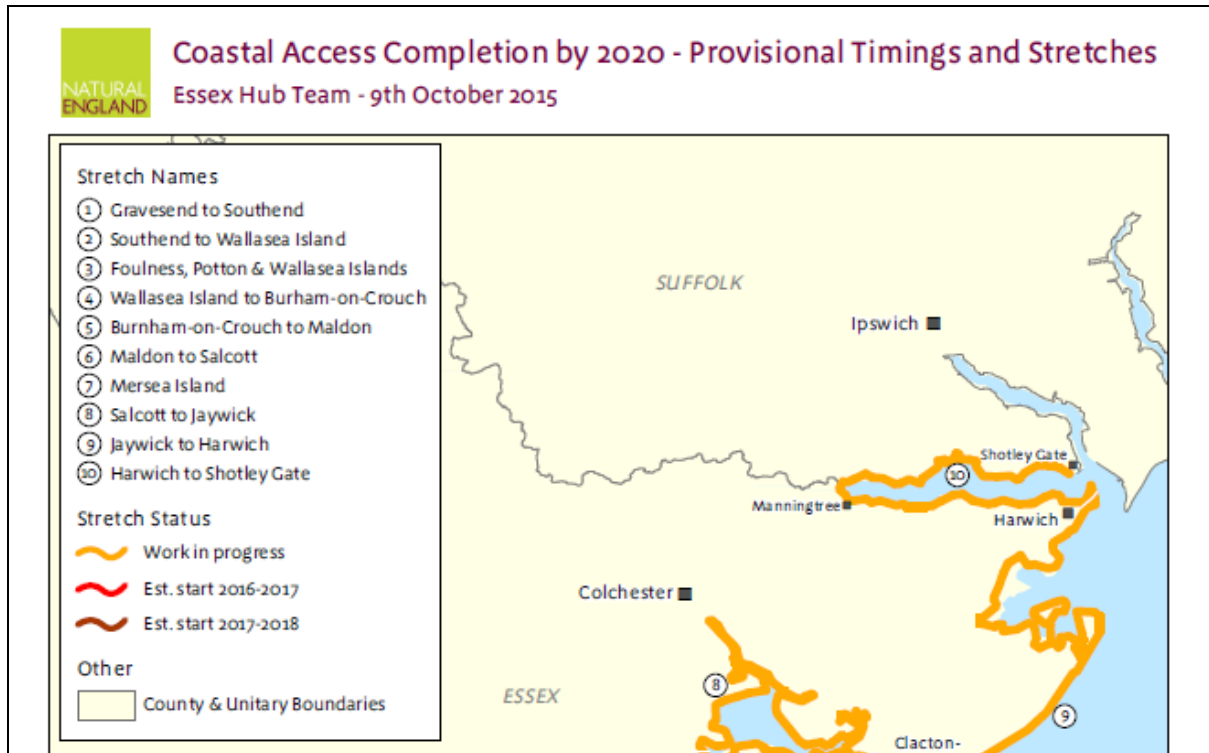
Coastal Access Map – East Coast



Further information here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/england-coast-path-in-the-east-of-england>

Cont.

Coastal Access Map – The Stour



Miscellaneous

The Scheme (methodology) for establishing coastal access can be found here:

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5327964912746496?category=50007>

END
AW/SCC Jan 2017

Guidance for PRow and Access Staff Planning Consultations and Applications

1. Introduction

The Government has signalled its commitment to see 1 million new homes delivered by 2020. Proposals for Suffolk vary from an estimated 70,000 to 95,000 new homes being needed by 2031.

Many of these new developments will be built on the edges of existing towns and villages, presenting threats and opportunities for our green access network. For example ensuring existing PRow are not obliterated or made unattractive to use, or seeking new funding from developments to improve green access links to the surrounding countryside and to the community's local services.

With pressure on Suffolk's green access network and budgets, it is essential staff are able to respond to consultations on new developments in an effective way.

The scope of this guidance is to:

- Provide a checklist of those aspects staff should consider to ensure a successful outcome for green access when a development is complete,
- Explain how we justify requests that we make,
- Consider on site PRow and offsite improvements,
- Ensure PRow are protected during construction,
- Advise on costing offsite improvements.

2. Onsite Requests (Conditions)

These are made as an alternative to outright refusal. I.e. "we will only approve this application on the condition that you ...". Conditions have to be agreed to before the developer can proceed. We need to give reasons for the condition. There is no money attached to a condition. An example of a condition might be to accommodate an existing PRow within a green corridor. Conditions are not used to deal with matters covered under separate legislation, eg ensuring the developer does not obstruct a PRow.

Planning conditions should only be imposed where they meet six tests, namely:

- i. Necessary;
- ii. Relevant to planning and;
- iii. To the development to be permitted;
- iv. Enforceable;
- v. Precise and;
- vi. Reasonable in all other respects.

3. Off Site Requests (Planning Obligations, Also Known As Section 106 Agreements)

These are private agreements made between local authorities and developers and can be attached to a planning permission to make acceptable a development which would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms. The land itself, rather than the person or organisation that develops the land, is bound by a Section 106 Agreement, something any future owners will need to take into account.

Requests made through planning obligations must meet the three Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) tests:

- i. **Necessary** to make the development acceptable in planning terms,
- ii. **Directly related** to the development, and
- iii. Fairly and reasonably **related in scale** and kind to the development.

Off site requests can cover all aspects of green access, from physical improvements to an existing PRoW to make it more resilient to increased use arising from a development, to creating new PRoW to link to a nearby community or another part of the access network.

4. Policy Framework: Justifying Green Access Requirements

Reasons for making requests must be aligned with the following policy framework.

- The National Planning Policy Framework,
- The Local Plan for the area,
- Other local strategies and policies.

Increasingly, new developments are seen as an opportunity to encourage healthy and sustainable lifestyles. Developments located on the edge of open countryside give additional opportunities for quiet recreation and research has demonstrated enhanced mental wellbeing benefits being in the natural environment. The county council believes it is important to influence new developments to ensure residents are able to enjoy these benefits and, where possible, minimise car use.

a. The National Planning Policy Framework

This is your planning bible and its core planning principles should underpin all of your responses. It states that planning should actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable (Paragraph 17). The same paragraph further states planning should take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.

Key sections of the NPPF include

Section 3 - Supporting a prosperous rural economy

Para 28 - To promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should...support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside.

Section 4 - Promoting sustainable transport

Para 35 –priority (should be)_given to pedestrian and cycle movements, creating safe and secure routes to minimise conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians and to consider the needs of people with disabilities by all modes of transport.

Section 8 - Promoting healthy communities

Para 69 - Planning policies and decisions, in turn, should aim to achieve places which promote...safe and accessible developments, containing clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.

Para 73 - Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision.

Para 75 - Planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to the rights of way network.

b. The Local Plans

National planning policy places Local Plans at the heart of the planning system. Local Plans set out a vision and a framework for the future development of the area, addressing needs and opportunities in relation to housing, the economy, community facilities and infrastructure – as well as a basis for safeguarding the environment, adapting to climate change and securing good design. They are also a critical tool in guiding decisions about individual development proposals, as Local Plans (together with any neighbourhood plans that have been made) are the starting-point for considering whether applications can be approved. Links are provided at the end of this guidance. Search on words like access; right; foot; bridle, walk; cycle; green space; countryside; natural environment etc.

c. SCC Strategies and policies

The following local policies also underpin our response and will be the strategies used to help local planning authorities deliver against the objectives set out in the Local Plan.

- The [Rights of Way Improvement Plan](#) which, inter alia, highlights the importance of development in rural areas should give people the greatest opportunity to access the countryside by walking and cycling,
- The [Walking Strategy](#), which seeks to ensure existing communities with a population over 500, and new developments over 10 dwellings have easy access to a one mile natural walk or 2ha of green space, within 500m of their home,
- The [Cycling Strategy](#), which seeks to promote a transfer to cycling (and walking) for short distance trips, plan and design for the future with cycling in mind and create a safe and cycle friendly environment,
- The [Joint Health and Welbeing Strategy](#), which focuses on preventing poor health and promoting the development of strong and resilient communities
- The [Nature Strategy](#) which seeks to ensure physical access improvements go hand-in-hand with wildlife sensitivity and quality interpretation, to enable people to access and understand our natural environment.
- The [Growth Strategy](#) which focuses on green growth by fostering developments which ensure our natural assets continue to provide the resources and environmental services on which our well being relies.

5. Costing Offsite Improvements

The objective with offsite improvements is to ensure the S.106 legal agreement includes a summary of green access improvements which meet the CIL tests, rather than an exhaustive breakdown of each improvement. A sum will normally be placed against the cost of SCC (and it will usually be the ROW & Access team which discharges this) implementing the improvements. Your detailed workings will still need to be available if requested.

.....

6. Making Best Use Of Your Time

Staff time is precious. When assessing a development, consider its size and the stage it is at (eg is the consultation only a preliminary scoping exercise to highlight general un-costed needs, or is it a full planning application). But remember, you may need to justify your ask to a planning inspector, so at the point it goes into SCC's formal response to an application, you need to be confident of it. *One of the most time effective things you can do is establish close links with LPA planning officers and SCC planners and development engineers!!*

7. Checklist

Use this table as an aide memoire to manage impact of development on green access. Please note it is not exhaustive, if you see room for improving it please say.

Site Location and Ref:			
ROW & Access Officer/s:			
Site Contact Details:			
LPA Officer:			
SCC Development Engineer:			
Developer:			
Core Agenda	Consider	Comments Where Applicable	Completed Y/N
On Site			
Consultation Phase	Impact on existing PRoW		
	Claimed PRoW		
	Does LPA and developer have copy of def map (digital or paper)		
	Should PRoW be diverted or retained within a new green corridor		
	Should PRoW be upgraded to facilitate cycling		
	How should PRoW be surfaced		
	How should PRoW be signed		
	Should PRoW be a gateway feature to the countryside		
	How are links made to surrounding countryside		
	How are links made to other green spaces		
	Consider access for all		
	How will residents walk and cycle to local services and transport hubs		
	Are there walking routes to local schools		
	Signage and furniture		
	Viability (eg green/brownfield)		
Construction Phase	Find out when construction is likely to start		

	Visit the site and use the site record form below		
	Highlight the legal position re ROW: Health & safety of users Offences - Disturbance of surface, obstruction Temporary Closures Permanent orders – TCPA or Highways Act		
	PRoW should be safe and convenient to use at all times and clearly delineated		
	Is there a construction management plan		
Off Site			
Consultation Phase			
	Find out if the development has an access scheme and how green access is covered		
	If the development has a landscape scheme what is its effect on PRoW		
	Proximity to SPA/SSSI (will require more mitigation)		
	Links to services		
	PRoW upgrades and creations to improve access to countryside, features of interest and links to existing PRoW		
	Creation of circular walks		
	How PRoW should be surfaced		
	Improved signage and seating		
	Opportunities to market to new residents?		
	Safe route to schools in other locations?		
	Opportunities to join up communities		
	Liaison with: Parish Council Natural Environment team Passenger Transport Team		

	Sustainable Transport Team Development Management Team		
	A leaflet for home welcome packs (£1000)		
Construction Phase	See under on site		
	Note offsite PRow may be used for site access		
	How will you ensure PRow are left in good condition		

AW/SCC
Dec 2016

LINKS:

NPPF <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>
 NPPG for planning conditions: <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/use-of-planning-conditions/application-of-the-six-tests-in-nppf-policy/>
 NPPG for planning obligations: <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/planning-obligations/planning-obligations-guidance/>

Local plans:

Forest Heath:
 St Edmundsbury:
 Mid Suffolk:
 Babergh:
 Suffolk Coastal:
 Waveney:
 Ipswich:

Developer's Guidance Leaflet.....

DEVELOPMENT SITE RECORD

Site Name	DC Reference	Date
Description and Developer		

	Dates submitted	Seen by Area	ROW comments	Permission granted
Outline				
Full				
Reserved matters				
Discharge of conditions				
Public Inquiry				
Specific conditions re ROW				

S106

Date of ask	Details	Sum	Date agreed/release dates

SITE WORKS

Developer & Contractors	Site contact	Tel/email

Temporary closure?

Site Chronology

Date started	Comment

Suffolk Local Access Forum
Title: Planning & Development
Meeting: 26th January 2017
Author/Contact: Andrew Woodin
Venue: Room G05 + G06, BrightSpace, 160 Hadleigh Road, Ipswich, IP2 0HH

1. Background

The impact of large scale developments and the planning policy on the green access network in Suffolk is one of SLAF's priorities to deal with. Last year, for example, members heard from one of West Suffolk Council's planners on how his council approaches applications and actively seeks opportunities to improve walking and cycling connectivity, including into the natural environment.

Section 94 of the CROW Act makes it the statutory function of forums to give advice to the following bodies:

- The appointing authority,
- Any county, unitary, district or borough council within the area of the forum,
- The Secretary of State (in effect this means any Government Department with a Secretary of State, e.g. Defra and MOD, as well as 'executive agencies' such as the Planning Inspectorate and Highways England),
- Natural England,
- The Forestry Commission,
- English Heritage.

2. Improving SLAF Engagement

It is proposed that members consider taking forward their interest in planning as follows:

- a) That the county council advises members of planning applications for significant or large scale developments, including those that consist of over 500 dwellings. Members could then decide whether they want to make a response on behalf the forum. It should be noted that application response deadlines will invariably fall outside of SLAF's quarterly meetings, and it is proposed the Chair and working group should be able to agree any response to the planning authority. Planning pressures within the ROW & Access team mean only limited officer resource could be given to members in supporting any response.

To give an idea of the number of large scale developments over the last couple of years, the following data has been compiled:

Applications 500 Dwellings and Over		Size	Date
Sudbury	Area to the east of Sudbury	500	04/03/2015
Kennett	Garden Village (Cambs)	500	16/11/2016
Woolpit	Land off Bury Road, north of The Street	500	09/01/2017
Felixstowe	Land surrounding Cowpasture Farm, Gulpher Rd	560	27/03/2015
Chilton	Chilton Woods	1,100	01/02/2016
Bury St Edmunds	Land south of Rougham Hill	1,250	18/12/2015
Brandon	Land to the west of Brandon	1,650	01/06/2015
Martlesham	Adastral Park	2,000	
Haverhill	Great Wilsey Park, Lt Wratting	2,500	16/12/2015
Ipswich	Garden/Fringe	4,000	

Data for smaller scale developments looks like this:

Applications Between 250 and 499 Dwellings		Size	Date
Thurston	Land off Ixworth Road	250	09/06/2016
Ipswich	Grafton Way	262	22/09/2016
Ipswich	Land at Discovery Avenue	278	12/08/2015
Eye	Former Airfield	280	20/10/2015
Lowestoft	Former Sanyo Site, School Road	300	17/06/2015
Kesgrave	Land at Longstrops to south of Grange Farm	300	17/06/2015
Onehouse	Land south of Union Road	300	15/12/2015
Brantham	Brantham Industrial Estate, Factory Lane	320	25/03/2015
Felixstowe	Land north of Walton High St	385	20/01/2016

- b) **Draft** guidance to ROW & Access staff has been compiled recently and a copy is attached as Appendix A. Members might find this helpful in their consideration of this paper. **Please note some sensitive data has been omitted and this paper is not for wider circulation.**
- c) SCC can invite speakers from the other local planning authorities to future SLAF meetings, to brief members on how they approach walking, cycling and green access when they consider their local plans and development proposals.

3. SLAF Working Group

Membership of the planning and development working group currently consists of Jane Storey, Jane Hatton and Anthony Wright. Members may wish to consider if this group needs updating.

END
AW/SCC Jan 2017

Suffolk Local Access Forum
Title: Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Boundary Review
Meeting: 26th January 2017
Author/Contact: Simon Amstutz/Andrew Woodin
Venue: Room G05 + G06, BrightSpace, 160 Hadleigh Road, Ipswich, IP2 0HH

1. Background

The Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership, made up of 26 organisations, see <http://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/projects-and-partnerships/the-aonb-partnership/> has a long held aspiration to extend its boundary.

2. Process of achieving an AONB boundary review

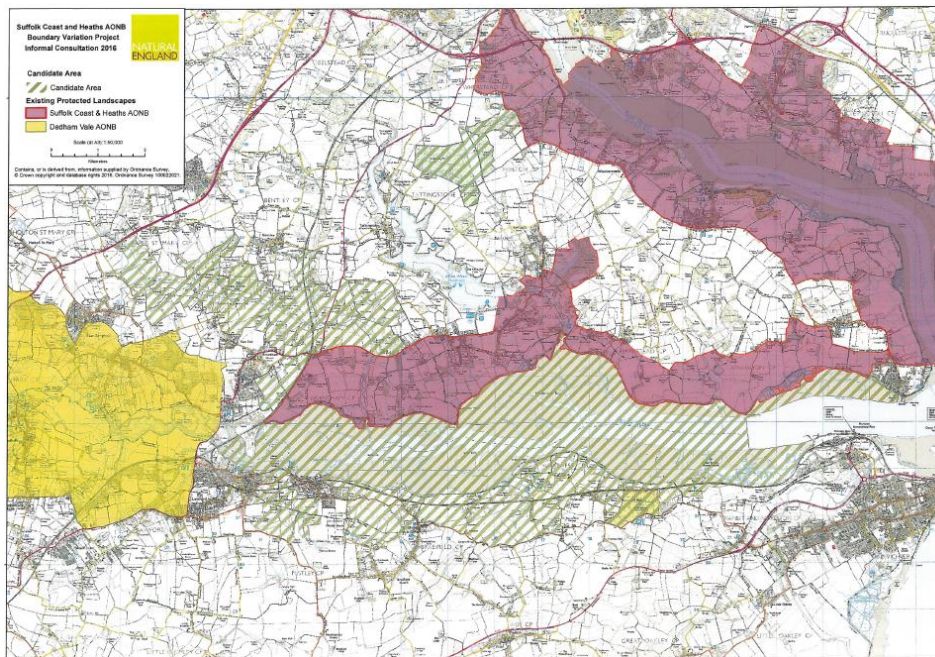
The process for reviewing AONB boundaries is laid out in the Natural England publication *Guidance for assessing landscapes for designation as National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England*.

In December 2013 the Natural England Board approved the initiation of a project to determine for itself whether the AONB boundary should be varied.

3. Update as at September 2016

Natural England has identified an area of search and has undertaken an informal consultation with the AONB Partnership and Parish Councils in the summer of 2016. A formal consultation will be undertaken in the winter of 2016/17.

The area of search is shown in the map below:



The formal process will include an assessment to determine if the area meets the statutory criteria of an AONB; undertake regulatory assessments; a full consultation and identifying an AONB boundary before a variation order is submitted to the Secretary of State for confirmation. It is not expected a variation order will be submitted to the Secretary of State until the second half of 2018.

It should be noted that the majority of the area of search is in Essex.

4. Implications for access

AONB status does not confer any changes to access rights.

5. Further information

AONB website:

<http://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/about-us/aonb-boundary-review/>

Natural England's designation strategy

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/2647412?category=10001>

Simon Amstutz, AONB Manager

simon.amstutz@suffolk.gov.uk

07971 909649

Suffolk Local Access Forum
Title: Membership audit and recruitment to SLAF
Meeting: 26th January 2017
Author/Contact: Claire Parker
Venue: Room G05 + G06, BrightSpace, 160 Hadleigh Road, Ipswich, IP2 0HH

Background

Since 2013/14 SLAF membership has reduced from 19 to the current position of 11 members. Full membership as of the date of this meeting can be viewed in appendix 1. The membership of SLAF currently represents the following interests.

- Wildlife
- Farming
- Countryside
- Cycling and Walking
- Sustainable tourism
- Disabilities
- Equestrian
- Sustainable Tourism
- Sales/marketing
- Community
- Agriculture
- Sports

Government guidance on LAF membership

Guidance states members of LAFs are volunteers and include a range of people from the local community, including:

- land owners and land managers
- access users such as walkers, cyclists and horse riders
- those representing other interests, such as health and conservation

New members are appointed by the local authority or national park authority, known as the 'appointing authority' or 'access authority'.

Although there is no definitive size for a LAF, the SLAF is currently running under normal capacity. This presents opportunities to review membership and interests and to recruit new members, which may augment the impact of the group. Issues for SCC to consider include

- Optimum size of the group to identify number of vacancies
- Audit of skills/interests to establish current strengths of SLAF
- Strategic direction for SLAF to help map strengths against gaps
- Timescales for recruitment
- Platforms for recruitment
- Procedure for recruitment
- New member induction to SLAF

Suggested Actions for SLAF

Action	Who Responsible	Comments	Date for completion
Update personal profile using form attached at appendix 2	All SLAF members	max 60 words	End Jan 2017. Send to Claire Parker. CP to collate and redistribute.

END

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Minutes of meeting held at Brightspace on 26 January 2017
Meeting Date:	20 April 2017
Author/Contact:	Sophie Morling
Venue:	Kesgrave War Memorial Community Centre

1. Welcome, apologies and housekeeping

Present: Barry Hall (BH) (Chair), David Barker (Vice Chair) (DB), Margaret Hancock (MH), Roland Wilson (RW), Monica Pipe (MP), Anthony Wright (AWR), Cllr Jane Storey (JS)

SCC Officers Present: Sophie Morling (SM) (minutes), Claire Parker (CP), Andrew Woodin (AW)

Member of the Public: Gordon Crosby (GC)

Apologies: Diana Kearsley (DK) John Wayman (JW), Gordon Merfield (GM), Jane Hatton (JH), Steve Kerr (SK)

2. Minutes of previous meeting (LAF16/19)

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2016 were reviewed and confirmed to be an accurate record.

It was noted Network Rail acknowledged SLAF's stage two response letter.

3. Declaration of interest – JS advised that next Tuesday 31 January 2017 is Suffolk County Council's Cabinet meeting.

4. Sizewell C

BH advised that he had produced a response on behalf of SLAF with regards to Sizewell C after a successful working group meeting with EDF Energy on 12 January 2017. There are concerns with 1) Eastbridge Road and the closure and the new proposed road 2) Retaining bridle and cycle ways.

AW advised that Suffolk County Council's response was being presented at Cabinet later this month. Similar comments were being put forward, including serious impact on Bridle 19 and Lovers Lane, which crossings are going to be controlled and not controlled and making any new heathland open access. AW also mentioned that a lot of consideration has been given to the coastal path.

RW asked at what stage are proposals for the Sizewell C legacy agreed and when will this be. AW advised this will be at stage 3 and an important part of the legacy would be to include a cycle link to Aldeburgh.

At the meeting of the working group earlier in the month, EDF offered a site visit for SLAF, to visit Aldhurst Farm. Members welcomed this offer.

SLAF members agreed they were all happy with BH's response.

ACTION: SM to send letter, once BH and AW added some points to BH's draft, and accept EDF's site visit offer, to be arranged for the April or July meeting.

5. Network Rail Level Crossings Paper Gypsy Lane

AW presented an update paper covering main crossings of interest, and the progress on the regional Transport and Works Act order.

A further meeting was held on 3 November 2016 with the design panel. GC spoke as a member of the public and explained Network Rail will have to submit a planning permission for the path. GC also mentioned that 50 people attended the exhibition held by NE in November. GC is unable to track down the 2 people who complained about the Creting St Mary bus route, but Creting Parish Council advised that 2 new bus stops should be created.

There were still concerns over the tunnel to be used and would a floor with a void underneath allow water to flow through and thus reduce the level or frequency of flooding. Network Rail advised that a model that was done of both with and without the void was very small in difference, even though no one outside of Network Rail has seen this model and the outcome. Flooding is estimated at 5-6 times a year and lot of detail is still to be worked through, including the tunnel approach ramps.

AWR asked if it will remain a footpath or be upgrade to a bridle path. AW responded by saying that Suffolk County Council continue to work with Network Rail to upgrade the diverted footpath to facilitate cycling. Network Rail has expressed its willingness to meet the cost of the upgrade, as mitigation for the substandard tunnel.

AW also advised that Suffolk County Council expects Network Rail to pay a commuted sum for clearing the tunnel when it floods. BH asked if this money would be ring-fenced? AW said it should be.

AWR asked if the new path would be a cycle track, would it be restricted to any equestrian use and if so land owners need 1.97 metres, minimum of 2.1 metres, cycles need 2.3 metres and horses 3.4 metres. And mounting blocks would need to be used each side and have dismount signs for both cycles and equestrian users. AW responded saying cycling could be facilitated by either the landowners to agreeing to convert the footpath to a cycle track or by making an order to create a bridleway and then prohibiting equestrians, as the route was not suitable for them. This would need talking through with equestrian groups.

Halesworth Station – Meeting with local MP had an desired effect and gates and safety warnings have been installed by Network Rail.

Felixstowe Branch Line – This is going much quicker than others. Trinity College's agent's Bidwells still have issues with the bridge that Network Rail want to build. AW advises that

Suffolk County Council are trying not to be involved with this, as we don't want to detract from what we are trying to achieve. Steve Kerr had a meeting with Bidwells and Network Rail on site to discuss this further, with Bidwells wanting to replace the bridge with a canal type bridge to take agricultural traffic. Discussion took place regarding agricultural traffic and pedestrians.

AW advised that SK went to the public consultation that was attended by 185 people, with different views on the safety and underpass and diversion via Keepers Lane.

AW mentioned that Network Rail have rejected Bidwells offer of a canal bridge and will be presenting the proposal to Secretary of State in March 2017. AW noted concerns that Network Rail want to have temporary closures of a year to construct the line with AW finding this unacceptable and will keep pushing that only sections will be closed at a time.

General/Countywide – 30 crossings in total and SCC submitted its stage 2 response before Christmas. About half of the crossings have been rejected for a number of reasons, including the length of diversions. AW said that SCC will expect Network Rail to pay a commuted sum to maintain the new highway assets and regional work is taking place with Hertfordshire, Cambridge and Essex for a common approach.

AW went to a meeting in Bury St Edmunds with regards to Cattishall, where developers have been in negotiations for 2 years with Network Rail for a stepped bridge, which the developers are paying for the footbridge, but all this is being held up by protracted negotiations. SCC have made it clear they expect the level crossing should remain open until new bridge is opened.

Network Rail draft audit will be finished in March and published in Summer 2017.

GC asked AW about Stacpool and concerns that pedestrians will now have to walk along the B1113 and through a field nature reserve, with restoration of west side of the railway. AW advised he would look into this.

RW gave an update on what the Ramblers Association have been doing. They have arranged a meeting with NR CEO Mark Carne. The RA is also in touch with Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Rural Affairs and Biosecurity Lord Gardiner and a 7 page response to the TWAO has been sent to NR from Anglia region Ramblers. The RA has written to the ORR letter stressing risk to pedestrians on local roads and NR going against sustainable development policies. A petition has been set up by the Ramblers and RW asked everyone to sign it, hoping that if enough people sign it, it could be discussed in Parliament. RW mentioned Suffolk Ramblers had written to all MP's in Suffolk and the MP for Waveney was sympathetic.

ACTION: CP to tweet link to petition.

6. Coastal Access Update

AW summarised the meeting that took place on 10 January 2017. Natural England continue to walk the route and talk to landowners and land managers. NE will start work on the remaining Suffolk stretches later this year and are working with SCC on a new collaborative agreement this year to pay for SCC officer time. AW noted Natural England has announced it is reducing its contribution for trails from 75% to possibly under 50%,

talks are still on-going. AW has written to the Access Director of Natural England with his concerns.

AW gave an update on promoting the England Coast Path which need some political involvement and is meeting with Cllr James Finch next month to discuss a regional approach to maintaining and promoting the trail.

7. Planning and Development

AW and BH said that they had discussed planning and wondered what the thoughts of SLAF thought and point options forward.

A discussion took place around this with AW mentioned about Jackie Gillis circulating the consultations for larger developments to either to everyone or just the Working Group. BH mentioned about getting another planner to come and meet everyone and discuss their area, possibly Coastal area. Members discussed what size of development they would be interested in, and AW noted only limited support would be available from SCC, but consideration could be given to training members.

After a stimulating discussion on the benefits of improving green access around new developments for health, wellbeing and sustainability, the following was resolved:

ACTION:

- Planning applications of over 500 dwellings would be copied to the planning working group, with other members ccd. SCC to consider training for all SLAF members
- Jackie Gillis to pull out all current developments of 500 and over (Kennett, Woolpit, Martlesham, Ipswich Garden Fringe)
- Invite a planner from east Suffolk to the April or July meeting.

8. Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

AW noted the formal former consultation this winter and to log on to website for more information. Whether SLAF supports this or not. BH supports this in principal.

ACTION: AW and BH to liaise regarding this

9. Recruitment

The meeting discussed recruiting new members, following the stepping down of a number of members over the last two or three years. Interests not covered as well as they might be potentially include health, education, the natural environment and conservation, land management, disabilities, and black and ethnic minorities.

DB advised that whoever is recruited need to attend meetings on a regular basis. AW said it was also important new members support the overall principle of improving access to the countryside. There was agreement that the forum should not expand beyond 16 people and would welcome another 4-5 people.

The following was agreed:

- SCC as appointing authority is responsible for recruiting and intends to do so later in the year,

- The opportunity will be given to members to step down,
- Members should consider how they can feedback work of SLAF to interest groups they are involved with,

Actions: 1. Members to return their interest forms to SM,
2. SCC to commence the recruitment process later in the year.

10. Any Other Business – AW briefed the meeting that Highways England is reviewing pedestrian access over Orwell Bridge, due to its use as a suicide location. SCC is resisting this closure and MH noted she uses the bridge to cycle across the Orwell.

11. Public Question Time – No questions from the public.

12. Dates of Next Meeting – 20 April 2017 Venue – Kesgrave, then 20th July 2017 venue tbc.

END